

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Independent claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define applicant's invention and to take into account the constructive suggestions by the Examiner for clarifying the claims. The claim amendments also further distinguish applicant's invention over the cited prior art. Favorable reconsideration by the Examiner is requested in view of the amendments and the accompanying discussion.

Heath et al.

Claims 1 and 3-12 stand rejected over Heath et al. US 5,494,622. Claims 13 – 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Heath et al. in view of Erspanner et al. Firstly, the production line described in Heath et al. does not apply powder material in the form of continuous powder strips which are adjacent to each other. Secondly, the powder material is applied to the carrier layer (first layer according to our claim 1) whereas the adhesive material is applied to the covering layer (our second layer according to claim 1), see FIG. 9. This is different from the process as defined in claim 1 as amended. The overall inline process differs also from that of FIG. 9. According to FIG. 10, the covering layer 27 picks up the powder material from the pockets of the carrier layer 26. These pocket regions 24 are fed together with the thus formed laminate 22 on a distribution layer 104, see FIG. 10 and Column 14, lines 37-45. Even there, no further adhesive is applied. As the layer 22 already is a laminate which encloses the powder pocket regions, no teaching is given to produce laminates from preforms with several continuous powder strips adjacent to each other as claimed. Consequently, the invention as defined in the claims is both novel and non-obvious with respect to Heath et al. and Erspanner et al.

Pedigrew

The claims have also been rejected over Pedigrew US 4,675,209 combined with various secondary references. Even Pedigrew does not describe the claimed method according to amended claim 1. The adhesive material which is applied according to FIG. 4 of Pedigrew is

discontinuously applied before the powder material is attached to the layer. Furthermore, the applying of the powder material to the layer differs from that which is now claimed. In conclusion, Pedigrew, either alone or in combination with the secondary references applied by the Examiner, does not teach or remotely suggest the method as now set forth in the amended claims. The prior art documents do not disclose the concept of applying powder strips adjacent to each other, then removing portions of each of the continuously applied powder strips and then applying binder to the thus cleared sections of the first layer before the second layer is arranged on the powder layer and the first layer.

For the reasons noted, the claims as now presented patentably distinguish over the prior art of record. Favorable reconsideration by the Examiner and formal notification of the allowability of all claims are solicited.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

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